

PORTAGE DISTRICT LIBRARY

Materials Selection Policy

1. PURPOSE

The purpose of the Portage District Library Materials Selection Policy is to set broad guidelines in order to assemble, preserve, organize, administer and promote the use of a wide range of communication media and to inform the public about the principles upon which selections are made. These functions are undertaken to further the objectives and mission of the Portage District Library.

2. DEFINITIONS

The term “library materials” means books, magazines, DVDs, CDs, or other synonyms as they may occur in the policy and has the widest possible meaning. For the library’s digital collections, selection of content can vary among third party vendors. In situations where the Portage District Library staff are not able to select individual titles, the selection of a third party service will be evaluated on the company’s reputation and overall content offerings. It is implicit in this statement of policy, therefore, that every form of permanent record is to be included regardless of format. However, this policy and the term “library materials” do not apply to Internet sites available through the Library’s computers or Internet collection. The Library has no control over the content of the Internet. Please see the Internet Policy for any issues related to computer or Internet use. The term “selection” refers to the decision to add, retain or withdraw material in the collection. It does not refer to reader’s advisory. This statement of policy applies to all library materials curated by the Portage District Library staff for adult, teen, juvenile, and preschool collections.

3. GOALS OF MATERIAL SELECTION

- a. To meet the individual’s need for information through maintenance of a well-balanced and broad collection of materials for information, reference, and research.
- b. To help the individual attain maximum self-development through life-long intellectual and cultural growth.
- c. To support the democratic process by providing materials for the education and enlightenment of the community.
- d. To assist individuals in their pursuit of activities related to their occupation and practical affairs.
- e. To provide diverse recreational experiences for individuals and groups.
- f. To assist institutions of formal education with services which will support individual study.

4. RESPONSIBILITY FOR SELECTION

The responsibility for selection lays with the Director or his/her designee pursuant to the Collection Development Plan. Both the general public and staff members may recommend materials for consideration. The ultimate responsibility for book selection, however, rests with the Library Director who operates within the framework of policies determined by the Library Board of Trustees. The Director shall be responsible for ensuring that the funds budgeted for collection development are

allocated appropriately depending upon the needs of the Library and the fulfillment of the above Goals of Material Selection.

5. GENERAL PRINCIPLES

- a. Selection of materials is based on the relationship of such work to the needs, interests, and demands of the Portage community. Basic to this policy is the Library Bill of Rights and the Freedom to Read Statement of the American Library Association to which this Library subscribes. Selection is not made on the basis of anticipated approval or disapproval, but solely on the merits of a work, without regard to the race, nationality, political, or religious view of the writer. Whenever censorship is threatened, from whatever sources, no library materials shall be removed from the Library until all steps in the Library's procedure for handling complaints about library material have been completed, or by order of a court or competent jurisdiction.
- b. Responsibility for the reading matter of children rests with their parents or legal guardians. Selection shall not be inhibited solely by the possibility that books may inadvertently come into the possession of children. The Library respects each individual parent's right to supervise his/her children's choice of reading materials. However, the Library does not have the right to act in loco parentis (in place of the parent). Therefore, a parent who chooses to restrict the materials his/her children select must accompany those children when they use the collection in order to impose those restrictions.
- c. Library materials will not be marked or identified to indicate approval or disapproval of contents by the Library, and no catalogued book or other item will be sequestered, except for the express purpose of protecting it from injury or theft. The use of rare and scholarly items of great value may be controlled to the extent required to preserve them from harm, but no further.
- d. It is the responsibility of the Library to provide circulating, reference, and research materials for the general public and the student based on the services it is expected to perform. Special "in depth" collections shall also be maintained when indicated by community interest.

6. SPECIFIC PRINCIPLES FOR SELECTION

The following principles, individually or collectively, will prevail in the selection of all library materials. The total collection will attempt to represent the variety of points of view.

- a. Present and potential relevance to community needs;
- b. Suitability of subject, style, and reading level for the intended audience;
- c. Importance as a document of the times;
- d. Appropriateness and effectiveness of medium to content;
- e. Reputation and/or significance of author, publisher, or producer;
- f. Positive review in one or more appropriate professional journals;
- g. Positive critics' and staff members' reviews;
- h. Relationships to existing materials in the collection;

- i. Within limits of budgets for materials;
- j. Not available, or with limited accessibility, from other lending sources;
- k. Insufficient materials available on the same subject;
- l. Author or illustrator is local;
- m. Format is appropriate to Library use and is not easily damaged;
- n. Enhances a specific collection within the Library;
- o. Author or producer is already represented in the collection;
- p. Literary and artistic merit;
- q. Accuracy of content;
- r. Popularity with library patrons;
- s. Preserves local community information and history;
- t. Available shelf or storage space.

7. GIFTS

Acceptance of gifts of materials shall be governed by the same principles and criteria applied to the selection of items for purchase. Gifts of books or other materials which do not align with the Library's objectives and policies will be refused. No conditions may be imposed relating to any item either prior to or after its acceptance by the Library. All gifts and donated materials (including works of local authors) become the property of the Library. Any item, which is not added, may be donated to another institution where it might be used, or it may be sold in a Friends of the Library Book Sale. Monies from such sales are used to benefit Portage District Library services and programs.

8. MAINTENANCE OF THE COLLECTION

As materials become worn, dated, damaged or lost, replacement will be determined by the appropriate staff member, who will determine whether or not:

- a. The item is still available and can be replaced;
- b. Another item or format might better serve the same purpose;
- c. There remains sufficient need to replace that item;
- d. Updated, newer or revised materials better replace a given item;
- e. The item has historical value;
- f. Another networking agency could better provide that or a comparable item.

9. REQUESTS FOR RECONSIDERATION OF LIBRARY MATERIALS PROCEDURE

The Portage District Library Board, administration, and staff support intellectual freedom and subscribe to the principles of the American Library Association's Library Bill of Rights and its statements on Freedom to Read and Freedom to View. The Library staff applies the selection criteria described in this Materials Selection Policy and thus endeavors to provide books and other materials that reflect the diversity of viewpoints within the community.

When a request for reconsideration is made by a patron, the procedure listed below is followed:

- a. A member of the library staff explains the selection policy to the patron. If the patron wishes, he/she may then submit a written Request for Reconsideration of Library Materials form to the Library Director.
- b. The completed form is reviewed by one or more members of the Library staff who have responsibility for materials selection, and by the Library Director. The Library staff members objectively review the resource in question to ascertain that the selection criteria and principles stated in Section 6, a through t were applied in the selection process. The Library Director or a designated member of the library staff will send a written response to the requester within 30 days of the date that the reconsideration form was submitted. The Library Director also notifies the Library Board of each Request for Reconsideration submitted.
- c. If the requester is not satisfied with the decision of the Library staff, he/she may appeal in writing to the Library Director, who then convenes a Reconsideration Committee. This committee will consist of: 1.) One member of the Library Board; 2.) One member of the Library staff with responsibility for materials selection who has not previously considered the material in question; 3.) One resident of the Library district other than the requestor, who is chosen by the requestor. In the case that the requestor does not identify a person for the Reconsideration Committee, the Library Board will select a resident of the Library district.
- d. In reviewing the request for reconsideration, the Reconsideration Committee employs the selection criteria (described above in this document) and considers other appropriate information, including professional reviews and recommendations, comments from the Library staff, and comments from the requester. Library resources are not removed from the collection during the review period. Copies of the materials in question may be checked out as evaluation copies for use by the Reconsideration Committee, the Library Director, or other appropriate Library staff.
- e. Within 60 days, the Reconsideration Committee will recommend an action to the Library Director, who will reach a decision and inform the requester and the committee in writing of that decision within 15 days of the receipt of the Reconsideration Committee's recommendation.
- f. Should the requester wish to appeal this decision, he/she may make a final appeal in writing directly to the Chair of the Portage District Library Board within 15 days of receipt of notification. The Library Board will review the documentation and render their decision within 60 days of receipt of the requester's appeal. Mail to: Portage District Library Board of Trustees, 300 Library Lane, Portage, MI 49002
- g. The Library Board serves as the final authority in cases involving retention or withdrawal of library materials.